



Highway 169 Preliminary Design & Environmental Documentation

Elk River

Fall 2008

<http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/srf/169elkriver/>

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Thank you for your interest in the Elk River Highway 169 Preliminary Design and Environmental Documentation project! This second newsletter provides an update on the Highway 169 project through Elk River. The newsletter summarizes background information and highlights of the preferred design that is being evaluated in the environmental assessment. More information about this project can be found using the contact resources listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Project Location



Study Area

The Highway 169 project extends 13.8 miles from Wright County Highway 39 to 278th Avenue north of Zimmerman. The specific study area includes the City of Elk River, Livonia Township, and the City of Zimmerman. The proposed Build Alternative includes replacing existing at-grade intersections at Main Street, School Street, 193rd Avenue/Jackson Avenue, 197th Avenue, 221st Avenue, Sherburne County Highway 25/19, and Sherburne County Highway 4 with grade-separated interchanges, improving the systems interchange at Highway 169/10/101, and redirecting all other streets and driveways along Highway 169 to new frontage or backage roads proposed along the east and west sides of Highway 169.

Why is this design being completed?

The Highway 169 corridor is an important north-south route in central Minnesota, connecting the central lakes region with the greater Twin Cities and the cities of Elk River, Zimmerman, and Princeton. Traffic volumes in the Highway 169 corridor are growing and are expected to continue growing. This growth combined with the presence of at-grade intersections and a mix of vehicle types (commuter, trucks, SUVs pulling boats/campers, RVs) results in delay, longer travel times, and an increasing number of crashes. The Highway 169 Preliminary Design and Environmental Documentation will identify improvements for the Highway 169 corridor to address safety and mobility issues.

What will the design accomplish?

The Highway 169 Elk River through Zimmerman Preliminary Design and Environmental Documentation is a step toward advancing the long-term vision of Highway 169 as a freeway facility. The purpose of this project is to identify the long-term design for the Highway 169 corridor that transitions Highway 169 from an expressway facility with at-grade intersections to a limited access grade-separated freeway facility. The study team has identified a Preferred Alternative, including interchanges, overpasses, and a system of frontage and backage roads along Highway 169. The study does not address local city street improvements, other than identifying local connections to Highway 169.

The Preferred Alternative was selected with the understanding that no funds have been allotted to construct these improvements. This timeline gives communities the opportunity to incorporate the identified highway improvements into local long-range planning documents and guide future land use in a way that will reduce construction and right-of-way impacts on the communities. This timeline also gives Mn/DOT an opportunity to stage the improvements. Mn/DOT intends to construct County Highway 4 in Zimmerman first, with other interchanges constructed as funds become available until the corridor vision has been implemented.

Proposed Improvements

221st Avenue Improvements



See website for Highways 10/101/169 systems interchange and interchanges north of 221st Avenue.
<http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/srf/169elkriver/>

193rd & 197th Avenue Improvements



Main Street & School Street Improvements



How were decisions made?

Design concepts were presented at the May 17, 2007 public meeting. From these concepts, the design team worked to prepare the designs shown. The Elk River design team included staff from the City of Elk River, Sherburne County, and Mn/DOT. The design team worked closely with Elk River City Council and Sherburne County Board members through the impact evaluation and decision making process. Officials from the City of Elk River have been proactive in working with Mn/DOT to develop a long-term corridor vision for Highway 169 and have strived to strengthen local connections across Highway 169 as the community continues to grow on both sides of the highway.

What is left to do in the process?

- Complete state and federal required environmental documentation – Environmental assessment document to be out for public comment in 2009
- Complete official Mn/DOT design review and approval – Anticipated early 2009
- Seek official municipal consent from the City of Elk River and the City of Zimmerman City Councils – Anticipated late 2009
- Procure funding for the project's final design and construction – No funding has been designated for these improvements



Project Goals

1. Enhance safety and mobility on Highway 169.
2. Ensure safe and efficient mobility for the traveling public in areas surrounding Highway 169.
3. Avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts, identify any regionally significant environmental and historical resources, and enhance current resources elements when possible.
4. Minimize social costs or expected future public expenditures for infrastructure.
5. Coordinate study decisions with local, regional, and state plans.
6. Encourage strong agency and interjurisdictional participation and seek consensus on a preferred alternative.

Project Information

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<http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/srf/169elkriver/>